

Architectural Style and Form: Vernacular Architecture (ca. 1800-1900)

As defined by the Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF), vernacular architecture refers to ordinary buildings and landscapes. Typically designed and constructed by local builders and contractors often with little or no formal training and experience with high-style architectural design, vernacular architecture was once rejected as crude and unrefined but has gained a more widespread consideration and appreciation in recent decades. Vernacular architecture comes in many stylistic variations, but is commonly found in gable-front, gable-front-and-wing, hall-and-parlor, I-house, massed-plan-side-gabled, and pyramidal massing types. Detailing was frequently minimal, or was derived from popular architectural trends, often simplified based on available skill and materials. In Western New York, vernacular architecture is extremely widespread and very common. Since the majority of early settlers to the area arrived from eastern areas.



5590 and 5596 Main Street

Two good examples of vernacular commercial buildings from the late 1800s, this type of building was common throughout the area and often used simple Italianate or Classical details.



78 East Spring Street

Once a barn, this building reflects the simplicity often associated with vernacular architecture. Here, function was obviously a clear concern above decoration and embellishment.

In Western New York, vernacular architecture is extremely widespread and very common. Since the majority of early settlers to the area arrived from eastern areas such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, the New England tradition was predominant in Western New York. These early buildings were built of wood or logs, a widely available building material and byproduct of clearing forests for farm land, and were often of the I-house, saltbox or gabled box form. It was often the earliest type of architecture present in the largest population centers, including Buffalo, built quickly and inexpensively before skilled architects, experienced labor, and sophisticated building materials were available.

Local Landmark Designs-Vernacular

- 78 Spring Street East
- 5590 Main Street
- 5596 Main Street

Address: 5596 Main Street
Architectural Style and Form: Vernacular Architecture



Description of Significance: 5596 Main Street is a good example of a 19th century commercial building on Main Street in Williamsville. 5596 and neighboring 5590 Main Street were constructed by Alexander Gotwalt and Henry S. Metz, who purchased the property from Benjamin Miller's estate in January 1893. 5596 Main originally consisted of two stores with two apartments on the upper floor, and the earliest business was George Steinbrenner and Joseph Abel's meat market around the turn of the century. In 1918, Ben and Barney Miller started a hardware and auto store, selling Ford parts, batteries, vulcanizing tires and a gas pump at the curb. The B. Miller Hardware store was a long-time fixture in the building, continuing into the 1970s. Presently the building houses a gift shop and salon.

Description of Property: 5596 Main Street is located on the north side of Main Street/Rt. 5 near East Spring Street in the Village of Williamsville. The building is a 2-story frame vernacular commercial building with a shed roof. 1st floor features two retail spaces with a central entry door to the upper level, flanked by fluted pilasters. Each commercial space features modern glass storefront systems with a brick veneer bulkhead, full-width continuous sign board with metal standing-seam roofing detail. 4-bay upper level with 6/6 double hung vinyl replacement windows and applied shutters. Bracketed cornice at top suggests modest commercial Italianate style.

**VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSVILLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

**Designation of historical landmark
5596 Main Street, Williamsville, NY**

**By Historic Preservation Commission Member: Wes Stone, seconded by Steven Dyson
Dated May 22, 2014:**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission (the "HPC") commissioned Clinton Brown Company Architecture, PC to perform an intensive level historic resources survey of properties along and near Main Street in the Village of Williamsville (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, the Project identified several properties that would be considered eligible for designation as a historical landmark pursuant to Section 47-4(a) of the Village of Williamsville Code including the property located at 5596 Main Street ("Subject Property"); and

WHEREAS, the HPC may nominate an individual property as a landmark if it meets any the following criteria:

1. Is associated with the lives of individuals or of people or of events significant in the national, state or local history.
2. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, a period or a method of construction.
3. Represents the work of a master architect or designer or possesses high artistic values.
4. Represents a significant or distinguished entity whose components may lack individual or special distinction.
5. Because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, based upon the intensive level survey and the HPC's review of other information related to the Subject Property, the HPC recommended the Subject Property for designation as a local historic landmark on February 24, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the HPC held a public hearing on April 3, 2014 in which the Subject Property owner and any interested parties had the opportunity to present testimony or documentary evidence at the hearing regarding the historic, architectural or cultural importance of the proposed landmark.

WHEREAS, upon a review of the aforesaid materials, and after due deliberation concerning each of the statutory criteria set forth above the HPC proposes to nominate the Subject Property for local landmark status;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the HPC hereby nominates the Subject Property for local landmark status based on its finding that it satisfies the following criteria set forth in Section 47-4(a) of the Village of Williamsville Code:

- Is associated with the lives of individuals or of people or of events significant in the national, state or local history.
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, a period or a method of construction.
- Represents the work of a master architect or designer or possesses high artistic values.
- Represents a significant or distinguished entity whose components may lack individual or special distinction.
- Because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.

The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution to approve the nomination of the Subject Property for local landmark status was duly put to a vote on roll call which resulted as follows:

Chairman Stone	YES
Ms. Armitage	YES
Mr. Bannon	ABSENT
Mr. Duval	YES
Dr. Dyson	YES
Ms. Fulwiler	YES
Ms. Waterman-Kulpa	YES